

ART

The bronzes which have survived from the Chou show a level of culture far from primitive. The sacrificial vessels especially command the admiration of experts everywhere. At the outset they displayed no sharp break with the Shang bronzes. Not far from 900 B.C. new forms, of inferior workmanship, supplanted their predecessors. About three centuries later a revival of old forms, but with more ornamentation than the latter and with inlays appeared. The new was known as the Huai style. Many samples of jade, too, show artistic taste and skill. Lacquer began to be employed.

LITERARY DEVELOPMENT

Writing by the prototypes of the present characters had been devised, as we have seen, at least as early as the Shang dynasty, and the Chou witnessed a fairly extensive and rich literary development. More characters were formed. Books were inscribed on tablets of wood or bamboo, presumably with ink. The language displayed dialectical differences, but these were not sufficiently marked, at least among the educated, to prevent a community of culture.

The earliest form of literature appears to have been religious in character—hymns sung at sacrifices, songs to accompany the dances and feasts in honor of the ancestors, and bits of prose to parallel the pantomimes performed in the ancestral temples. Poems were composed for the great ceremonial occasions at court—banquets, archery contests, receptions, and the like. To these were added folk songs—satires, laments of widows, complaints of soldiers whose officers had conducted them to defeat, dances of the young in the spring, love songs, songs at

the birth of a child, for weddings, and the like. Many are included in that anthology of ancient verse, the *Shih Ching*, or Classic of Poetry, brought together in Chou times. Still others are to be found in compilations of the period which contain both poetry and prose. While the original text of the *Shih Ching* has suffered in transmission, a large proportion as we have it to-day is probably authentic.

Prose owed much to the official scribes charged with the prepa-